



## **Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Grant**

### **Alaska Workforce Investment Board**

**May 24, 2011**

#### **Grant Summary:**

On September 29, 2010 the AWIB was awarded a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration in the amount of \$2,727,000 to improve education, training and employment opportunities and outcomes of adults who are unemployed and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits (SSI and SSDI). Alaska was one of nine states to receive an award under the DEI, and partner agencies include the Employment Security Division (ESD), One Stop Job Centers, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Division of Public Assistance (DPA) and Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education.

The five primary goals of the DEI are to; 1) Increase the number of adults with disabilities who use the one stop job centers to secure employment by 20%; 2) bring all one stop job centers in Alaska up to level III of "DPN" (Disability Program Navigator) implementation maturity (a model developed in an earlier grant defining a high level of proficiency in serving customers with disabilities); and 3) increase the number of certified work incentive counselors and number of customized employment and /or customized self employment providers in Alaska by 15%. The final two goals are to; 4) increase the availability of local resources e.g. asset building, accessible transportation) that help job seekers with disabilities secure and maintain employment by 15%; and 5) sustain a full time Disability Resource Coordinator within the One Stop Job Center system permanently.

DEI Grant / Disability Awareness training and onsite assessments of physical and programmatic accessibility will be done at each of the One Stop Job Centers across the state. In the first year, up to 15 staff located at various One Stops will be trained as lead DRC's in their specific locations with staff at remaining locations to be trained in the latter half of 2011. The primary focus is to bring all One Stop job center staff up to a "proficient" level of awareness of best practices in serving individuals with disabilities and to coordinate with DVR, private community rehabilitation providers and other local service providers for individuals with disabilities in each job center location. Once staff can demonstrate proficiency, the focus will move to other staff person to eventually bring all staff to proficiency. The end goal is to have all staff within the One Stop Job Centers proficient and to have in place an Employment Network system that is sustainable and ensures that individuals with disabilities who contact any staff within the job centers will receive accurate, appropriate and current information and direction in developing a coordinated plan that is consistent with their individualized conditions of employment. By integrating the Employment Network aspect of the Social Security Ticket to Work program, the State and/or service provider partners can receive milestone payments for individuals served that obtain and maintain employment that can be reinvested into the system for sustainability.

## **Grant Update: February 22<sup>nd</sup> – May 24<sup>th</sup>**

To date, a pilot site has been established at the Juneau Job Center as an Employment Network to provide employment services in collaboration with DVR to individuals receiving SSI or SSDI. Staff at the Juneau; Anchorage Midtown; Anchorage Muldoon; Ketchikan, Sitka, Kenai, Homer, Mat Su and Fairbanks, Kodiak, and Dillingham One Stop Centers have received disability awareness training and site accessibility assessments and community provider forums have been held at each location to gather input on how the grant can collaborate with them at a local level in creating a customized employment services model for job seekers with disabilities at each location.

Since the February 2011 AWIB meeting the following activities have taken place;

- ✓ Onsite One Stop Staff and local Disability Resource Coordinator Training have occurred at Ketchikan, Sitka, Kenai, Homer, Wasilla, Dillingham and Fairbanks.
- ✓ Site physical accessibility reviews were done at Ketchikan, Sitka, Kenai, Homer, Wasilla, Dillingham and Fairbanks.
- ✓ Community Provider meetings were held at each site to provide a grant overview followed by gathering of input on how the grant activities fit with their area from local service providers, state agencies, partners (DVR, DPA, etc.) and One Stop staff.
- ✓ There was a site visit in Juneau with DJ Diamond from the National Disability Institute (technical support) March 7-9, 2011, DEI program staff and staff from the Juneau One Stop Center.
- ✓ Southeast provider meeting was held in conjunction with NDI site visit.
- ✓ A Job Center Services Integration Committee (JCSIC) meeting was held in conjunction with the NDI site visit with partner input gathered from the Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation, Employment Security, Behavioral Health, Public Assistance and Business Partnerships.
- ✓ The second quarter report was submitted to the ETA on May 16.
- ✓ There will be a site visit in Juneau June 6 and 7, 2011 with the evaluation team from Social Dynamics (this is the firm contracted to do an analysis of all DEI programs data) for DEI program staff and ESD staff who work with ALEXsys.
- ✓ There will be a JCSIC meeting on Monday June 6 in conjunction with the site visit from Social Dynamics, the national data collection contractor.
- ✓ A One Stop staff internal website has been developed to provide training and resources for all One Stop staff in serving customers with disabilities.
- ✓ Regular meetings have been held with DVR to coordinate the pilot Employment Network for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries who wish to utilize their Ticket to Work for short and long terms employment supports through the Juneau One Stop.
- ✓ A DEI Management team meeting will be held on June 6 to review input from grant partners, agency staff, and local community service providers across the state and to make proposed amendments or modifications to the grant for years 2 and 3 that will ultimately result in a sustainable model of serving all individuals with disabilities seeking employment or self employment opportunities through the One Stop system.